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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [ETRD](#) [IR](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: OMAN CONTINUING TO SEEK EXPANDED ECONOMIC TIES
WITH IRAN

REF: A. MUSCAT 774
[1](#)B. MUSCAT 662
[1](#)C. MUSCAT 633

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (U) Local press announced on December 14 that Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Maqbool bin Ali bin Sultan, will lead an official delegation to Tehran on December 22 to discuss bilateral trade. No further details have been publicly released.

[1](#)2. (C) Given his past involvement in negotiating a potential deal with Tehran to develop Iran's Kish gas field (refs A-C), Maqbool may continue talks with Iranian leaders on the terms of a possible energy agreement. The Iranian and international media have lately been silent on the status of gas talks, but the Japanese Ambassador in Muscat recently told the Ambassador that Oman's Minister of National Economy, Ahmad bin Abdulnabi Macki, invited Japanese firms to "participate" in the development of the Kish field during the Minister's visit to Tokyo earlier this month.

[1](#)3. (C) The Oman News Agency has reported that a consortium led by Omantel, the state-controlled telecommunications provider, with Iranian partners has qualified for the second stage of bidding for Iran's third mobile phone operator license. Omantel's Director of Strategic Marketing, Dr. Rashid al-Haribi, has taken several trips to Tehran in pursuit of the license. According to his brother, an embassy LES, al-Haribi found the Iranians to be "very demanding and difficult," but was nonetheless optimistic that the Omantel consortium would win the bid process.
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